

## **WANT TO SPREAD THE POSITIVE MESSAGE OF SOLUTIONARY RAIL TO YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS?**

### **HOST A HOUSE PARTY!**

We're all in this together! And yes, we *can* de-carbonize our energy and transportation infrastructure. This visionary idea needs your help: we need to build partnerships and pressure decision-makers to make this vision a reality, but to do that we need volunteers to help and donors to pitch in.

You can help expand the Solutionary Rail list of supporters and volunteers. Invite your neighbors, friends, co-workers, church members, and family to experience what a great idea Solutionary Rail is by throwing a party Backbone style ... grassroots, meaningful and with a vision for a positive future.

#### **House parties are a great tool to:**

- Identify new friends to Solutionary Rail, who might be prospective donors or volunteers
- Inform and inspire prospective donors regarding the Solutionary Rail vision
- Recruit volunteers and grassroots activists to grow the project
- Bring in much needed support

#### **WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN**

It's up to you on the **Who**- but the urgency of climate change requires us all to step up! And we all have something to contribute. House parties are to RAISE awareness and money. **What/Why**-because house parties are a great way to support our important work in creating systematic change from the ground up. **When**- as soon as possible. Summer time and election years are difficult for Backbone staff to spend time fundraising as we are on the go a lot and so are many other folks-so the sooner the better.

#### **HOW—MAKE IT FUN BUT HAVE A PLAN**

Timing: An hour and a half is ideal-- either right after work (5:30 – 7:00 pm) or early evening (7:00 – 8:30 pm). Think of the first half hour for arriving, eating and socializing, the 2<sup>nd</sup> half hour for the program, and the final half hour for answering individual questions, arranging for follow ups, goodbyes.

#### **The Program**

- Hold at half-way mark, and keep to 30 minutes. Have folks refresh drinks before talking begins.
- Welcome, intros, thank yous for coming and thank you to host.
- Begin with a personal story about how you got connected to the Solutionary Rail project. Then weave that story into the bigger mission. Explain why the Solutionary Rail vision is important to you and others, how it is a grassroots movement that addresses the urgent

need to de-carbonize our transportation and energy infrastructure. Tell of accomplishment(s) – through slides and/or video. Work with Solutionary Rail staff to get the materials you need. This can be short but packed with a punch and with lots of visuals.

- “We can't continue this important work without your support.”

### **THE ASK:**

This is simple- just tell people why we are fundraising and what their support will impact. People donate when they feel inspired and additionally know their dollars will make a difference.

## **5 things to ask for at House Parties**

1. Buy the book today to learn more about the project.
  2. Sponsor Books: Make a donation of \$150 and get 10 books in the hands of key decision makers (either the donor can send these to their contacts or the SR Team will make sure they get delivered to important potential allies.)
  3. Donate: Join the Lumbar Club and make a recurring monthly gift to staff the Solutionary Rail project.
  4. Become a Solutionary Rail Grassroots Ambassador: Download our Grassroots Activist Toolkit and start spreading the word in your community by writing a Letter to the Editor, getting the book in your library and local bookstores, hosting a house party, getting a Resolution passed by your local group, attending the next Organizing Call via your phone or computer.
  5. Volunteer: Fill out the Volunteer Form and make a commitment to help move the project forward.
- Hand out the pledge forms or have them pull out their phones and donate right then and there (SolutionaryRail.org/donate). Take 3-5 minutes for people to complete their donations.
  - Ask for a commitment from guests: Don't just ask for money- it about growing the movement and engaging them in the community- say something like:

*“By supporting Solutionary Rail today, you not only help get us toward our goal of decarbonizing our transportation and energy infrastructure, but you become part of this amazing community of caring, compassionate, and dedicated activists. I'm confident your contribution will make an incredible impact and will honor your values in creating a world that is NOT for sale but rather protects that which we love – our home, the Salish Sea, the future of our children and grand children...”*

- Closing statement

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

## **Timing**

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays work best. Set the date 5 weeks from when you're ready to start planning. Work with Backbone to select a date & focus of the party.

## **Invitations**

Decide on whom to invite from your circle of contacts.

Do you want Backbone Campaign to go through our Solutionary Rail list for potential invitees?

Consider co-hosting with another person to expand your invite list.

It doesn't take a lot for a critical mass; 9-10 friends + Solutionary Rail staff/volunteers can make a great gathering.

**Personalized invitations are necessary** - guests come because someone they know invited them personally; **emails are too impersonal.**

- Phone guests to invite them 4-5 weeks before the party
- Follow up with an email reminder after the call
- Email again 3-6 days before the party.

*(Based on lots of experience, we cannot stress how important the personal nature of the invite is!)*

## **Refreshments**

**Serve only light refreshments –it's not about food, it's about the mission!** If after 5:30 serve finger food; if 7:30, serve dessert. Wine, beer, and a **good assortment of non-alcoholic beverages** are key.

## **Collateral Materials**

- Have enough brochures for each guest.
- Books
- Name tags and markers.
- Guest book or sign in sheets, to capture people's email and phone numbers.
- Pens, pledge forms and response envelopes for everyone. Small clipboards are helpful.
- Have a basket or bowl to collect responses in.

## **Follow Up**

Kindly share names of guests with Solutionary Rail staff, with contact info and what they're interested in. A key staff or board member will call your guests to follow up. If you could also send an email thank you to your guests the next day that would be great.

Thank you! To take the next step to plan a gathering, please email  
[amy@backbonecampaign.org](mailto:amy@backbonecampaign.org)